

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 667901

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 1 1978
DATE ENTERED OCT 11 1978
DATA SHEET

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Fort Macomb

AND/OR COMMON
Fort Macomb

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Chef Menteur Pass on US 90

CITY, TOWN New Orleans VICINITY OF

STATE Louisiana CODE 22 COUNTY Orleans CODE 071 ✓

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Office of State Parks

STREET & NUMBER
P. O. Box 44426

CITY, TOWN Baton Rouge VICINITY OF Louisiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Notarial Archives
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER
421 Loyola Avenue

CITY, TOWN New Orleans STATE Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE 1978 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN Baton Rouge STATE Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ft. Macomb is a semicircular bastioned casemated brick fort which was erected along the Chef Menteur pass (Bayou) circa 1820.

The boundaries of the nominated area were chosen to encompass that which remains of the original military reservation. South and east of the fort, a channel has been dredged at the former site of the fort's outer earthworks. Indeed, nothing remains of the earthworks except for the old entrance, a semicircular brick walled passageway which occurs west of the fort. Further north and west of the fort is an area which was devoted to service buildings including the commissary store, the carpenter's shop, blacksmith's shop, stable, hospital and kitchen, married soldiers' quarters, the bakehouse, and some officers' quarters. None of these buildings remain today.

The main work of the fort remains intact according to the original design. The work consists of three earth filled brick bastions which occur at the south, west, and north corners, with a broad curving frontal escarp (defense wall) which faces the pass (bayou). The bastions are connected by short straight "curtain walls" on the land side. Immediately behind the escarp wall and the "curtain walls" are a series of individually barrel vaulted casemates which contained cannons. The barrel vaults are pierced laterally by sub-vaults which connect the casemates. The joints between the various vaults are well formed and show considerable ingenuity in the shaping and fitting of the bricks. This is particularly true behind the frontal escarp where the casemates must follow a curve. All formerly cannon mounted casemates have segmentally arched embrasures, with chamfered sides through which the cannons were fired. The cannon mounted casemates in the northwest wall are interrupted by a large central arch which forms the main entrance.

Behind the outer cannon chambers is an inner row of casemates of various sizes which were used as magazines, and to duplicate the functions of the out buildings in time of siege. These inner casemates face onto the "courtyard or parade ground", which contains the enlisted men's barracks-citadel, two cisterns, and the remains of the hot shot furnace. This furnace, of which only the foundation remains, was used to heat the cannon balls so that they would cause wooden ships to burn upon impact. The barracks-citadel functioned both as a residence and a last ditch defense. The walls are pierced with two rows of "loop holes" for small arms fire.

The "courtyard" also contains a brick ramp and a granite stair at two corners to give access to the rampart tops where there were additional gun placements to increase fire power. The only other noteworthy construction detail is the corbel table.

The only significant intrusion on the fort site is a corrugated tin roofed pleasure boathouse. The state of Louisiana is currently in court to have the building demolished. In any case, it is at a discrete distance and does not interfere with the lines of the fort. Nei does it significantly hinder visual appreciation of the fort structure.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ft. Macomb, with its rounded frontal escarp and bastioned rear, shares its design with the nearby Ft. Pike, a design which is otherwise unique in terms of surviving forts in the United States.

Fts. Macomb and Pike were designed simultaneously, and were the first forts built in a nationwide policy of coastal fortification construction, a policy which was in force from the end of the War of 1812 to the Civil War. Large masonry forts were no longer constructed after about 1860 when rifled artillery rendered them obsolete. This interwar period may therefore be regarded as the zenith of American military architecture. Inasmuch as the main work at Ft. Macomb retains its original design in total, it is one of the best extant representatives of this period.

In 1816 President James Madison placed the distinguished French General Simon Bernard, who served brilliantly as an engineer under Napoleon, in charge of planning a system of coastal defense for the United States. Upon receiving his commission in America, Bernard immediately turned his attention to the defense of the Mississippi Delta where memories of recent British penetration were vivid.

In 1817 he personally surveyed the Chef Menteur Pass and designed the magnificent semi-circular, bastioned, casemated fort to replace a small earthen battery erected on the site by American forces during the Battle of New Orleans.

This fort, along with Ft. Pike (National Register) was the first of a new type of large bastioned casemated forts which was to replace the simple earthwork batteries which had been in use since the colonial period.

The decision to adopt this new policy of a comprehensive coastal fortification system was influenced by the British invasions in the War of 1812, and the successful defense of Baltimore harbor by Ft. McHenry.

Ft. Macomb was completed in 1827 and garrisoned in 1828. After completing his work on U. S. coastal fortifications in 1831, General Bernard returned to France where he was made a lieutenant general and aide to King Louis Philippe. He later served as general of engineers, was twice French minister of war and in 1834 made a peer of France.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Milner, P. M. "Fort Maccomb", Louisiana Historic Society Publication, vol. 7-10, 1913-17 p. 143-152.
- Robinson, Willard B. "Maritime Frontier Engineering: The Defense of New Orleans", Louisiana History, Fall, 1977, p. 5-62.
- Swanson, Betsy & Toledano, Roulac "Fort Maccomb", New Orleans Magazine, August 1969, p. 21-25.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 5 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

16A 15 | 2 2 9 6 5 0 | 3 3 2 9 10 5 0

B | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries encompass the fort itself along with a strip of land to the northwest which is bounded to the south by the dredged waterway, to the north by a winding road and to the west by Rt. 90.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Betsy Swanson

Revised by Jonathan Fricker

ORGANIZATION _____

DATE _____

STREET & NUMBER

1204 Napoleon

TELEPHONE

891-9900

CITY OR TOWN

New Orleans

STATE

Louisiana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 24 April 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE 10/14/78

ATTEST: William Lebovich

DATE Oct 10, 1978

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 1 1978
DATE ENTERED	OCT 11 1978

Fort Macomb

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

8. Significance (cont'd)

The design for Fort Macomb was termed "a battery in circular form" by General Bernard. The curved front was intended to allow the greatest possible arc of fire power coverage to defend Chef Menteur Pass against approaching ships. An exposed wall of this length was adequate, because moving ships could not concentrate fire in one place long enough to cause a break. However, a land mounted cannon could do this so the land side of the fort was protected with outer earth works and designed with solid bastions to insure total fire coverage.

One year after the design was drawn up, Chief of the Corps of Engineers, Joseph G. Swift, contracted with James Bennett and Peter Morte of Washington to construct the fort on the Chef Menteur. Because of difficulties in finding laborers and delivering materials to the remote region, work was not begun until 1822 at which time construction was supervised by Captain James Gadsden of the Corps of Engineers. The structure was completed six years later under the direction of Lt. William M. Chase. When the work was complete, Major General Edmund P. Gaines, Commander of the Western Division, commended the engineers for their "superior talents" in the "perilous marshes" and said they were as deserving of praise as the soldier under "frequent fire of an enemy". Indeed, numerous laborers died of yellow fever while constructing the great fort, as did many soldiers stationed there during the decades of its occupation.

The total cost of the work as of September 30, 1828 was \$362,812.08. Fort Macomb was originally named Fort Wood in honor of Eleazer D. Wood, a hero of the War of 1812, but was renamed in 1851 in honor of Alexander Macomb, an early chief of the Corps of Engineers and later Commander in Chief of the Army.

The fort was first garrisoned by Company H, 2nd Artillery under the command of Captain Richard A. Zantzinger, in February 1828. Fort Macomb never saw military action. In January of 1861, a detachment of the First Regiment of Louisiana Infantry under the command of Lieutenant R. C. Capers occupied Fort Macomb, which was ungarrisoned and under the care of an Ordinance Sergeant. When Federal forces ascended the river and captured New Orleans in April of 1862, Confederate forces in Fort Macomb evacuated the work and fled to safety.

Although the Department of War considered Ft. Macomb essential to the defense of New Orleans as late as 1896, it was not manned and in 1924 the property was donated to the State of Louisiana.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 1 1978
DATE ENTERED	OCT 11 1978

Fort Macomb

CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

9. Bibliography (cont'd)

Pitts, Stella, "Past 10 Years Bad Ones for Fort Macomb", The Times-Picayune
(New Orleans), March 20, 1977, p. 16.

Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, National Archives, Record
Group 77.

American States Papers: Military Affairs.

Congressional Record.

Records of the War Department, National Archives.